
Lusophone Studies and Communication Sciences: introductory note

Os Estudos Lusófonos e as Ciências da Comunicação: nota introdutória

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LUSOPHONE STUDIES AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES: INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Moisés de Lemos Martins, Alda Costa & Isabel Macedo

While the Portuguese-speaking community numbers exceeds the 250 million, only a minority develops a sense of belonging based on a common language. According to Mozambican author Mia Couto (2009), Lusophony is not a full-throat reality, but only a *luso-afónico* [luso-voiceless] place, a place with no voice, with no knowledge or recognition of the similarities and differences of others, in the vast geographical and cultural space of Portuguese-speaking countries and their diasporas. In recognizing this divide, in 1997 the Communication Science associations of the Portuguese-speaking space launched a cooperation network, firstly researchers from Portugal and Brazil, followed by researchers from Galicia, and later on throughout the entire Portuguese-speaking space. This movement is based on the assumption that linguistic diversity enriches sciences and that this should be global and contextually relevant. Lusophony can be discussed according to several viewpoints, all related to the cultural identities of Portuguese-speaking countries. Furthering this viewpoint means centering on the language's social status. This leads us to regard English as the dominant language.

However, there are several challenges the Portuguese-speaking research groups have to face in a global world dominated by Anglo-Saxon paradigms. Still, focusing attention on the language means considering it as a cultural manifestation, expression of thought, a relational space and instrument of the world's symbolic organization. Such an understanding coincides with the Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of symbolic power, as well as the post-colonial perspective, which questions domination, submission, subordination and control of peripheries, minorities, diasporas, migrants and refugees.

In the current context of globalization, which is a reality commanded by information technologies and whose nature is eminently economical and financial, the studies on Lusophony calls for, at least, three complementary research directions. If we hold to a post-colonial viewpoint, we can, on the one hand, question Portuguese-speaking narratives as a construction, in several voices, of a transnational and transcontinental geocultural community. We can also interrogate the policies of language and communication as a symbolic struggle for asserting a plural community, in the diversity of Portuguese-speaking peoples. And we can also question the complexity of the movement of interpenetration of cultures. With various gradations, such a movement comprises colonialism, neocolonialism and post-colonialism, in the relationship between peoples, while translating, in like manner, encounter, assimilation and domination, in interaction among ourselves and with others.

Bearing in mind different national contexts, Portuguese-speaking studies move, above all, within the transcultural and multicontinental space where Portuguese is the official language. Just as they move in the diasporas of each of these countries. In keeping with post-colonial studies, Portuguese-speaking studies question identity-related interpenetration of us with others, opened by Portuguese expansion in the 15th and 16th centuries, a complex and contradictory reality, where troubled waters in upheaval mix.

This number of *Comunicação e Sociedade* precisely moves among these three research directions. By adopting a transdisciplinary and transcultural viewpoint, and with applied linguistics as the primary angle of focus, Armando Jorge Lopes discusses the concept of Lusophony, which is understood as a place of reflection, knowledge and recognition of oneself and of others. In his view, Lusophony is not possible “without sharing, without reciprocity, without interpenetration of the speech and cultures of the speakers and writers of the various languages that millions of CPLP citizens use both natively and non-natively” (p. 54). In this reflection, the notion of *relation* – “made up of all differences around us and in the world” (p. 47) – turns out to be vital in analyzing interconnectivity and linguistic interdependence. Armando Jorge Lopes shows a preliminary outline of a work program, bearing in mind articulation and planning as well as linguistic policies in the sphere of Lusophony.

For their part, Rovênia Amorim Borges and Almerindo Janela Afonso discuss the hegemony of the English language and the fact that, in countries where Portuguese is the official language, their policies contribute toward enhancing inequalities and disadvantages for applicants to international scientific mobility programs. The routes taken by international students are predominantly turned to institutions that offer English-language courses, with the United States and the United Kingdom as the biggest recruiters of international students. The authors consider that international mobility comprises a new form of *coloniality of power* (p. 74). Indeed, international mobility makes use of the hegemony of English for gaining access to scientific and technological centers par excellence, which start off by ruling out a set of international Portuguese-speaking students, thereby perpetuating inequalities “made invisible by the English language hegemony” (p. 83).

In this line of thought, Moisés de Lemos Martins argues that a great language of cultures and thinking, as is the case with the Portuguese language, likewise cannot help but be a great language of human and scientific knowledge. The author coins the concept of *crossing*, to think about hastening time through technoscience, and technological crossing, through sites, portals, social media, repositories, digital archives and virtual museums. By taking Lusophony as the object, Moisés de Lemos Martins questions the political, strategic and cultural state of Portuguese-speaking countries, within the context of globalization, with English as the hegemonic language. Such a state causes these countries to face the problem of their linguistic, cultural, political and scientific subordination. In the author’s view, the condition of the political subordination of Portuguese-speaking countries is expressed by their state of linguistic, cultural and scientific subordination.

By exploring the Victor Lopes documentary *Língua – vidas em Português* [Language – lives in Portuguese] (2004), Regina Brito questions the characters’ opinions on the

Portuguese language, as well as the representations of the culture they belong to, by depicting Lusophony as a space marked by the coming together of differences. “More than bridges (which are built almost always in a straight line and, at times, in only one direction)” (p. 144), the author understands that the construction of Lusophony requires producing networks of contact and meaning, in a continuous and legitimate collective construction.

In the text “Flows, transits and (dis)connection points: contributions toward a critical Lusophony”, Luís Cunha, Lurdes Macedo and Rosa Cabecinhas provide reflections surrounding the concept of Lusophony, thought out as “a crossroads for narratives fueled by history as much as from social memory” (p. 177). To these authors, this is a meeting and divergence point, where distinct narratives cross paths. Luís Cunha, Lurdes Macedo and Rosa Cabecinhas examine the discourse of Jorge de Sena, who traveled to Mozambique on a working visit, in July 1972. During his stay in Mozambique, Jorge de Sena reflected on the situation of the Portuguese language in the world, while acknowledging that, though spoken by millions, it was, in fact, ignored. In the authors’ opinion, Jorge de Sena advocated a “‘culture of language’, founded on the scientific knowledge of history and on an aggregating multiculturalism” (p. 170).

The characterization of scientific production in the last 10 years in Communication Sciences regarding the Portuguese-speaking topic constitutes the main goal of the article by Anabela Gradim, Paulo Serra and Valeriano Piñeiro-Naval. These authors confirm that interest in the topic, as well as scientific production in this field, has been on the rise, as Brazil and Portugal are the countries showing the greatest interest in studying them. On the other hand, as they point out, the bibliography used in the examined texts are predominantly produced in Portuguese, mostly by women.

In the article “Peripheral contexts of artistic creativity: the angolan case” José Carlos Venâncio examines the trajectory of angolan visual arts since the late colonial period. Despite the frailties and imbalances closely related to economic and political contexts experienced – specifically, an economy too reliant on oil production – and with a lack of state support for the arts, the context of angolan artistic production, according to the author, presents an advantage, rooted in the stand taken by their authors and in the esthetic quality of their works, whose “forms and styles (...) provide their production with authenticity and identity” (p. 231).

The political participation of the *helpless connected* in Mozambique is the topic of reflection proposed by Dércio Tsandzana, who examines the role of social media, particularly Facebook, in the political and social involvement of the urban youth in Mozambique, in the last four years. The author notes that social media overall still cannot be regarded as spaces enabling youths’ actual political participation, whether for access-related reasons, or the low interest shown by Mozambican youth toward politics. According to the author, the *helpless connected* are the young people, who represent “the face of urban unemployment and social and economic precariousness in Mozambique” (p. 263). The author adds that these young people, who live in the cities, as well as in rural areas, use social media to “‘complain without showing their face’ and ‘without leaving the network’” (p. 263).

In an analysis of the public participation of the Portuguese in cyberspace, Tiago Lima Quintanilha brings to bear data from the Digital News Report 2018 (DNR), of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, and points out the today's occurrence of appropriating multiple ways of public participation in cyberspace, for example, in sharing news, comments on news and participation in online voting processes. As pointed out by Frenette and Vermette (2013), the author notes that there's no guarantee that the internet is able to stimulate citizens' critical involvement. Though the internet boosts freedom of expression, sharing something that has already been publicized or circulating on the web overrides publication on one's own initiative.

The following two articles in this number of *Comunicação e Sociedade* look into collective narratives and memories, regarding Portugal's 1974 Revolution. Filipa Perdigão Ribeiro presents an overview of the most notable collective narratives and memories in the Portuguese context, while highlighting the historical events shaping them. The author concludes that most narratives "insist on the image of Portugal as a very homogeneous country, with a strong in-group discursive construction" (p. 338). This way, Filipa Perdigão considers that, in most contemporary narratives, "recurrent collective memories of historical events, symbols and literary canonical writers" (p. 338) appear to prevail. For her part, Camila Garcia Kieling offers us a reconstitution of narratives on the Revolution dated April 25th, 1974, in Portugal, from coverage by two reference Brazilian newspapers: *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *Jornal do Brasil*. According to the author, the coup in Portugal shook the world's political imagination, reigniting clashes between left- and right-wing backers, at a time when Brazil's military dictatorship completed 10 years of existence.

In the section *Varia*, Maria José Brites and Cristina Ponte discuss resistance to the media within family contexts of socialization and in mediated societies. The authors examined 18 interviews conducted in Portugal to young people and their families, seeking to perceive "signs of resistance and/or of impossibility of using the media" (p. 412). The authors identify several types of resistances and constraints, which manifest in different ways. For instance, their non-use, be it for reasons of a structural nature (family-related imposition), or socioeconomic reasons, or given the interest in turning to other entertainment and information alternatives.

This section also comprises the article "Historical report as narrative procedure" by Juremir Machado da Silva, who blends history, journalism and literature, as this is understood as a procedure for constituting a specific narrative, historical or intellectual reporting for further development.

The reviews by Vítor de Sousa and Micaela Ramon close out this number of *Comunicação e Sociedade*, regarding "Lusophone Studies and Communication Sciences". Vítor de Sousa gives us his take on *Crítica da razão Negra* [Critique of black reason], by Achille Mbembe. And Micaela Ramon examines the *História sociopolítica da língua portuguesa* [Sociopolitical History of the Portuguese Language] by Carlos Alberto Faraco.

One final note serves to point out that the texts published in this number of *Comunicação e Sociedade* respect the orthographic variations of the various Portuguese-speaking countries. //

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Moisés de Lemos Martins is Professor of Sociology of Culture and Communication at the University of Minho (Braga, Portugal). Director of the Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS), which he founded in 2001. He is the author of a vast body of academic work in the field of the epistemology and sociology of communication.

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